

CONFERENCE PRESENTATION 1

;

;

© 2021, THE MEALS4NCDS PROJECT



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction, provided the original work is properly credited.

Cette œuvre est mise à disposition selon les termes de la licence Creative Commons Attribution (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>), qui permet l'utilisation, la distribution et la reproduction sans restriction, pourvu que le mérite de la création originale soit adéquatement reconnu.

IDRC Grant/ Subvention du CRDI: 108983-001-Measuring the healthiness of Ghanaian children's food environments to prevent obesity and non-communicable diseases

Providing **M**easurements, **E**valuation, **A**ccountability, & **L**eadership **S**upport (MEALS) for NCDs prevention: Lessons from Ghana



Professor Amos Laar

School of Public Health, University of Ghana
alaar@ug.edu.gh

European & International Congress on Obesity. 01-04 Sep. 2020 ECOICO ONLINE2020



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Presentation outline

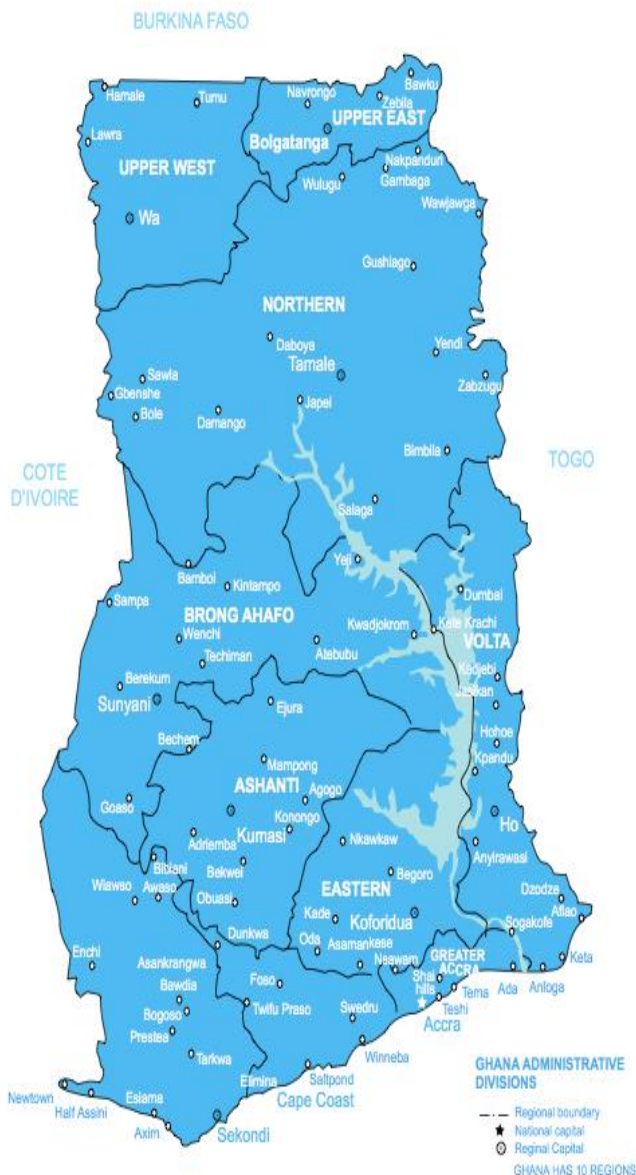
- The Efforts
- 3-related projects & small-scale studies
 - Dietary Transitions in Ghanaian Cities Project (DFC Project)
 - Dietary Transitions in African Cities Project (TACLED Project)
 - MEALS4NCDs Prevention Project
- Actual and potential contributions to providing MEALS for NCDs prevention in Ghana



Background

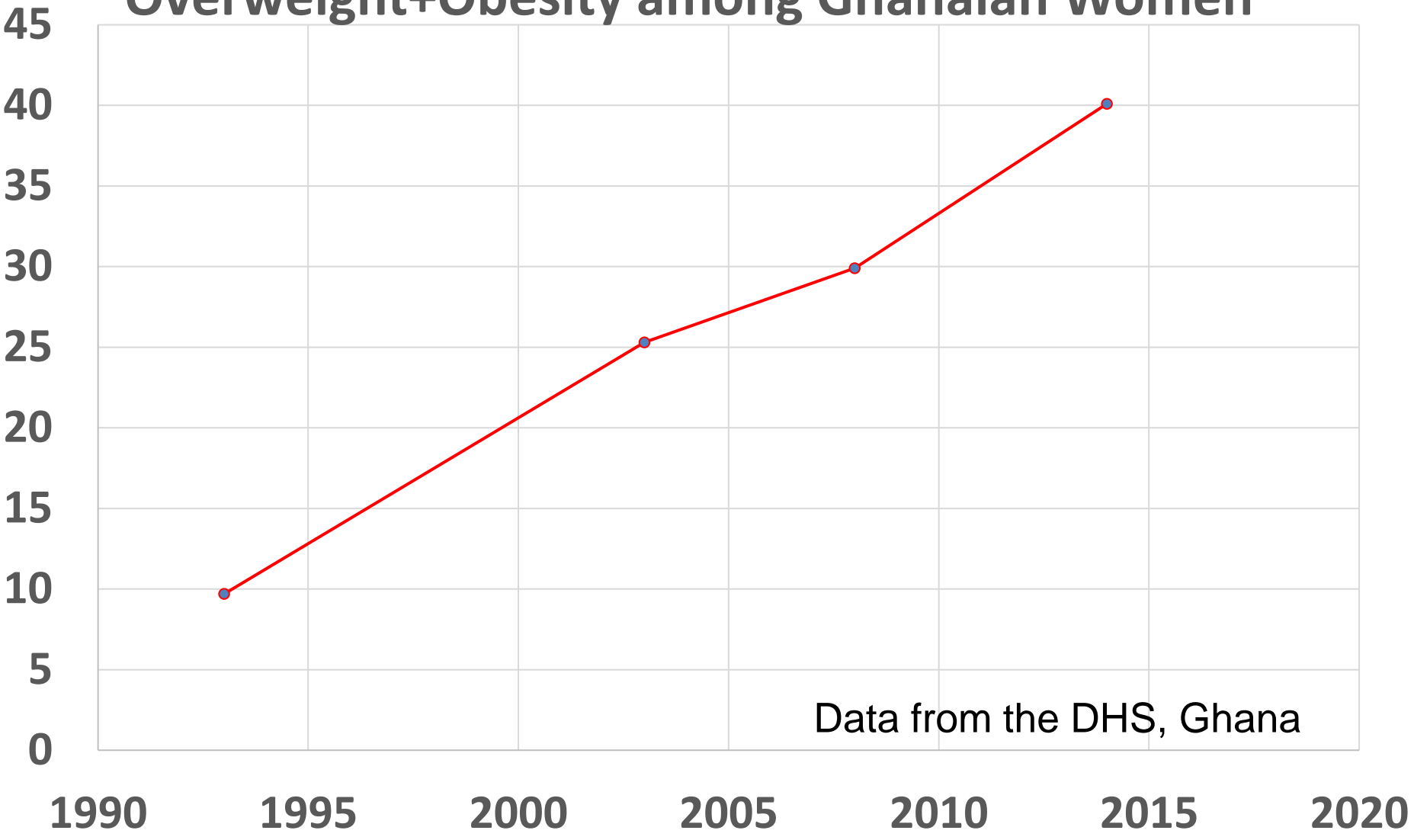
Ghana, like other African countries, is experiencing a rise in the prevalence of obesity and nutrition-related non-communicable diseases (NR-NCDs).

Analysis covering the period, 1980–2015, reveals >500% increase in prevalence of adult obesity in Ghana
_IHME University of Washington



Background

Overweight+Obesity among Ghanaian Women



Background

- Over 40% of current adult deaths in Ghana are attributable to NCDs.
- The tidal wave of obesity and NR-NCDs is a consequence of market, government, and food system failures (Moodie et al 2006; Teicholz, 2014).
- Such failures require decisive & effective response
- *No simple solution available*
 - The need for food environment/food systems-wide approaches

Providing MEALS for NCDs prevention in Ghana



| [MODULES](#) ▾ | [COUNTRIES](#) ▾ | [RESEARCH](#) ▾ | [NEWS](#) ▾ | [RESOURCES](#)

What is INFORMAS?

INFORMAS (International Network for Food and Action Support) is a global network of public-intellectuals that support public and private sector actions to increase healthy diets and reduce related inequalities.

INFORMAS supports the [WHO's Global Action Plan for Diet, Physical Activity and Nutrition \(2013-2025\)](#) and the [World Cancer Research Fund International](#)

Who is involved in INFORMAS?

Public Sector
Policies and Actions
(Food-EPI)

Private Sector
Policies and Actions

Food Composition

Food Labelling

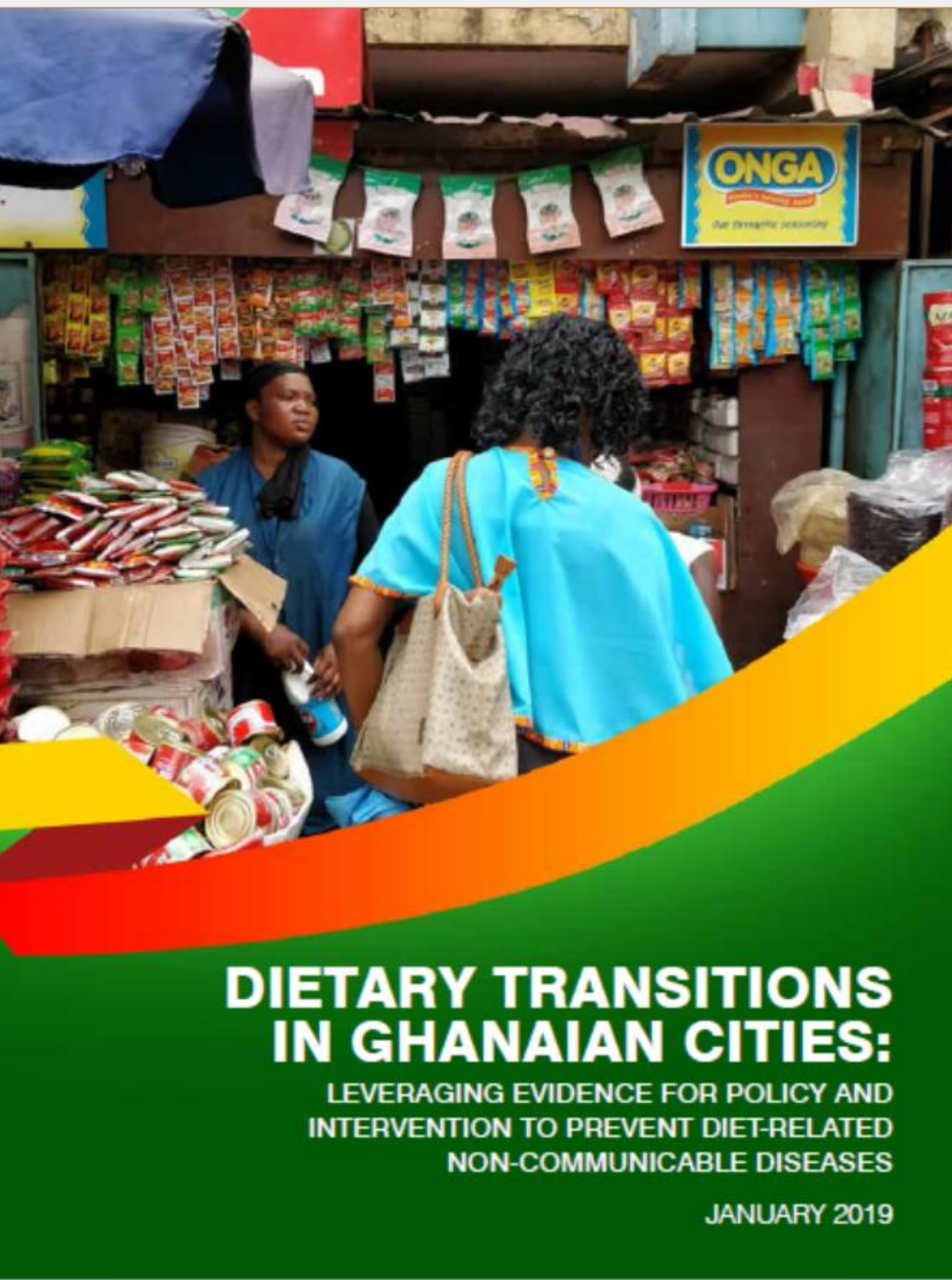
Food Promotion

Food Provision

Food Retail

Diseases (NCDs) Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RME) Network of researchers that aims to monitor, benchmark and evaluate interventions and reduce obesity and NCDs and their

[World Cancer Research Fund International](#) [Control of Non-Communicable Diseases \(2013-2025\)](#) work.



We engaged:

- Individuals
- Communities
- Local stakeholders
- National stakeholders

Our research at national level - Priorities for national action

Benchmarking food environments to prioritise policies and interventions

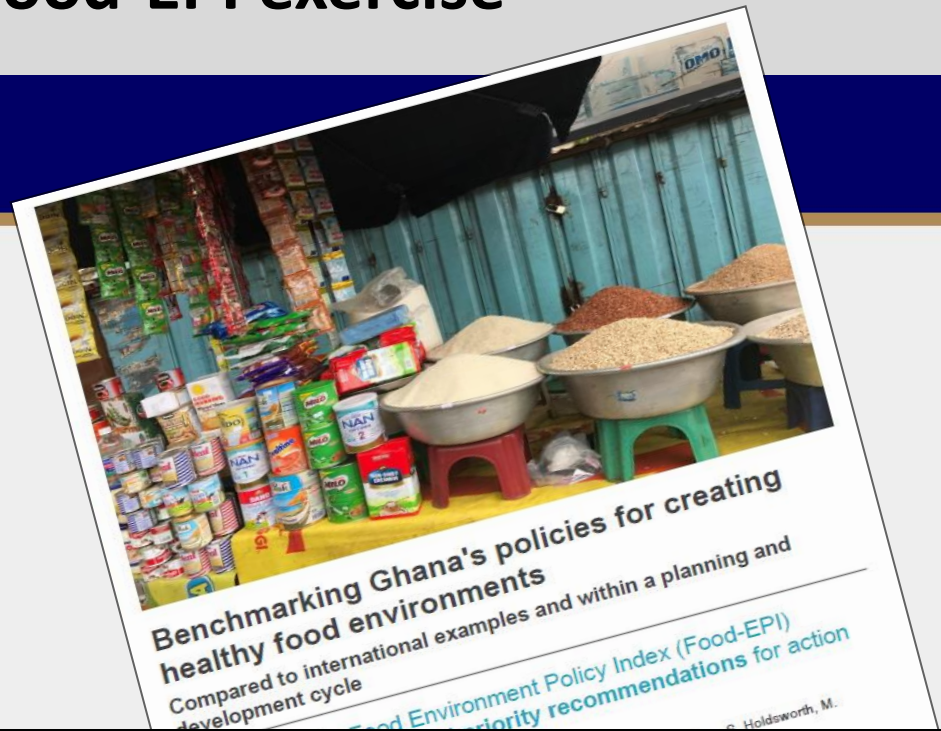


The Ghana Food-EPI exercise

Aims

Assess the extent of Government's implementation of recommended policies to create healthy food environments.

Identify priority actions for the Governments to take forward in partnership.



obesity reviews

doi: 10.1111/obr.12073

Review

Monitoring and benchmarking government policies and actions to improve the healthiness of food environments: a proposed Government Healthy Food Environment Policy Index

B. Swinburn^{1,2#}, S. Vandevijvere^{1#}, V. Kraak^{2#}, G. Sacks^{2#}, W. Snowdon^{2,3#}, C. Hawkes^{4#}, S. Barquera⁵, S. Friel⁶, B. Kelly⁷, S. Kumanyika⁸, M. L'Abbé⁹, A. Lee^{10,11}, T. Lobstein^{12,13}, J. Ma¹⁴, J. Macmullan¹⁵, S. Mohan¹⁶, C. Monteiro¹⁷, B. Neal¹⁸, M. Rayner¹⁹, D. Sanders²⁰ and C. Walker²¹ for INFORMAS[^]

Top policy priorities- high importance and feasibility



Legislation to control marketing of unhealthy food and beverages in the media & in and around schools



Policies to ensure healthy foods are affordable

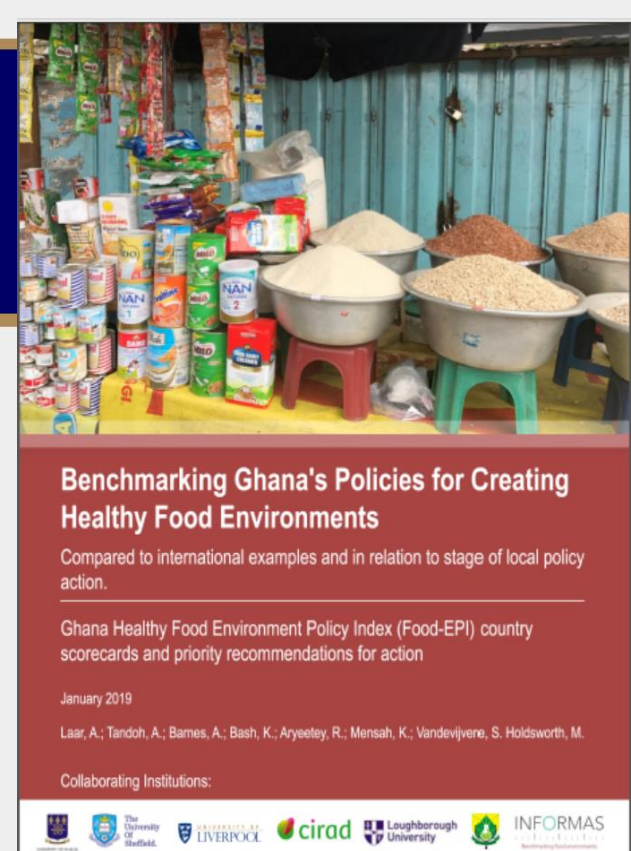
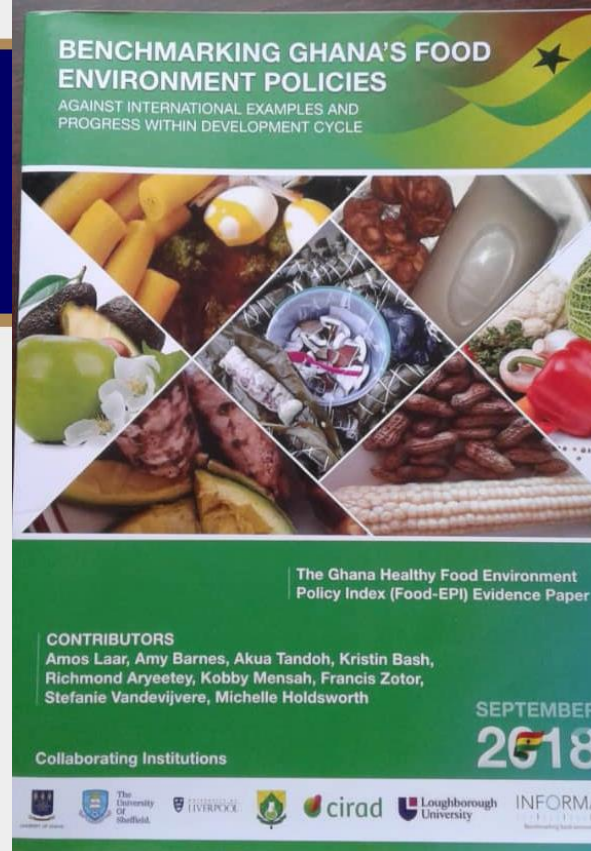
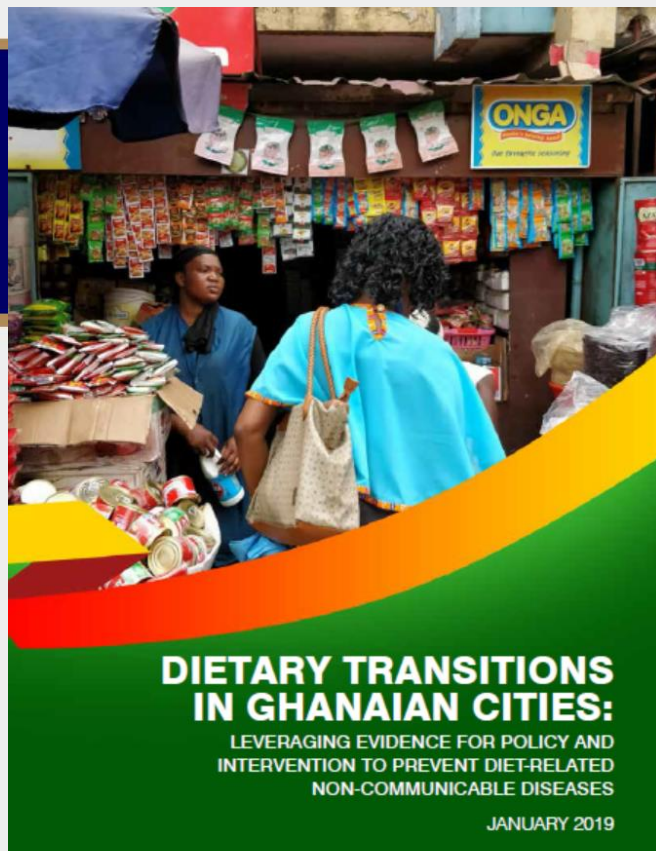


Government support for advocacy on nutrition labelling



Interventions to improve school feeding programme (capacity building for school caterers)





Food Policy 93 (2020) 101907



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

Food Policy

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/foodpol



Implementation of healthy food environment policies to prevent nutrition-related non-communicable diseases in Ghana: National experts' assessment of government action

Amos Laar^{a,*}, Amy Barnes^b, Richmond Aryeetey^a, Akua Tandoh^a, Kristin Bash^b, Kobby Mensah^c, Francis Zotor^d, Stefanie Vandevijvere^e, Michelle Holdsworth^{b,f}



Healthiness of foods and non-alcoholic beverages marketed on popular Ghanaian Televisions channels (targeting children)

- Of the 1,926 adverts recorded, 590 were of foods and beverages. $\frac{1}{4}$ of advertised foods were SSB
- Food ads were accompanied by at least one persuasive technique
 - potential to influence children's purchases and consumption of energy-dense nutrient-poor foods.


• **Healthiness of foods on promotional flyers of fast food outlets located within Accra-based shopping malls**

- 100% of the foods (n=79) on the promoted flyers were unhealthy
 - comprising high sodium/saturated fats (n=36), high sodium exclusively (n=40) and high in added sugar foods (n=3).
- The unhealthy foods were greatly discounted (average percentage discount was 27.5%)

Commercial food advertising on the campus of Ghana's largest University

- Of 503 advertisements recorded, ~50% were food ads; → ~ 60% of food were unhealthy
- ~ 4 of 10 advertised food products were SSB
 - Promotional techniques included the use of claim pronouncement, promotional characters, premium offer, and price promotion.

BMJ Open Investigating foods and beverages sold and advertised in deprived urban neighbourhoods in Ghana and Kenya: a cross-sectional study

Mark Alan Green ,¹ Rebecca Pradeilles,² Amos Laar,³ Hibbah Osei-Kwasi,⁴ Nicolas Bricas,⁵ Nathaniel Coleman,⁶ Senam Klomegah,⁷ Milka Njeri Wanjohi,⁸ Akua Tandoh,⁶ Robert Akparibo,⁹ Richmond Nii Okai Aryeetey,⁶ Paula Griffiths,² Elizabeth W Kimani-Murage,⁸ Kobby Mensah,¹⁰ Stella Muthuri,¹¹ Francis Zotor,⁷ Michelle Holdsworth¹²

A high availability of SBB (39%), as well as processed/fried foods (42.4%) – EDNP/EDNR

A good diversity of food items (a good mix of healthy and unhealthy items)

The logo features four vertical bars of increasing height from left to right, colored light green, medium green, dark green, and orange.

MEALS4NCDs

Providing Measurement, Evaluation, Accountability
& Leadership Support (MEALS) for NCDs Prevention

- Current focus: restricting unhealthy food marketing to children and improving school nutrition environments
- Engaging CSOs, national (MDAs), regional and international stakeholders (Academia, UN agencies, Regulators, Members of Parliament)

Thank you! MEALS4NCDs Investigators

[Home](#) [About the Project](#) [Project Resources](#) [Related Projects](#) [FERN Initiative](#) [Useful Links](#) [News & Events](#) [Contact Us](#)



Project Investigators

This project is a collaboration among 10 researchers from 7 academic and research institutions across Ghana, Kenya, Netherlands, France and Belgium.

Lead Institution: University of Ghana



Dr. Amos Laar
Project Leader & Principal Investigator
University of Ghana, Ghana
[Profile →](#)



Prof. Richmond Aryeetey
Co-Investigator
University of Ghana, Ghana
[Profile →](#)



Dr. Matilda Laar
Co-Investigator
University of Ghana, Ghana
[Profile →](#)



Dr. Kobby Mensah
Co-Investigator
University of Ghana Business School
[Profile →](#)



Professor Francis Zotor
Co-Investigator
University of Health and Allied
Sciences, Ho, Ghana
[Profile →](#)



Dr. Dennis Laryea
Co-Investigator
Non-Communicable Diseases
Programme, Disease Control and
Prevention Department, Public
Health Division, Ghana Health
Service.



Dr. Gershim Asiki
Co-Investigator
African Population and Health
Research Center (APHRC), Kenya
Institution
[Profile →](#)



Professor Michelle Holdsworth
Co-Investigator
National Research Institute for
Sustainable Development (IRD),
France
[Profile →](#)



Dr. Stefanie Vandevijvere
Co-Investigator
Sciensano Research Institute,
Belgium
[Profile →](#)



Prof. Daniel Sellen, UofT Canada



Professor Charles Agyemang
Co-Investigator
Academic Medical Center, University
of Amsterdam, Netherlands
[Profile →](#)

Convening a critical mass of experts → Africa Food Environment Research Network (FERN)



1ST AFRICA FOOD ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH NETWORK (FERN) MEETING
FERN 2020 VIRTUAL MEETING

THEME: Connecting Food Environment Researchers across Africa
DATE/TIME: November 3 - 5, 2020 | 12:00 GMT - 4:00 GMT (+ 00) each day

DETAILS

[Home](#)

[About the Project](#)

[Resources](#)

[Related Projects](#)

[FERN Initiative](#)

[Useful Links](#)

[Press](#)

[News & Events](#)

[Blog](#)

[Contact Us](#)

FERN → collaborative environment & cross-pollination of ideas towards creating healthier FEs in the African sub-region. It will stimulate capacity building, in particular among younger researchers.

1st Africa Food Environment Research Network (FERN) Meeting | FERN 2020 | Virtual Meeting

FERN 2020 Virtual Meeting

November 3 - 5, 2020 | 12:00 GMT - 4:00 GMT (+ 00) each day

**The programme is a draft subject to change*

Meeting Theme: Connecting Food Environment Researchers across Africa

FERN Meeting 2020

1st Africa Food Environment Research Network (FERN) Meeting

November 3 - 5 2020, Accra, Ghana

Project Resources

[Members Area](#)

[Reports](#)

[Publications](#)

MEALS4NCDs Advisory Board

[Home](#)[About the Project](#)[Project Resources](#)[Related Projects](#)[FERN Initiative](#)[Useful Links](#)[News & Events](#)[Contact Us](#)

Project Advisory Board

This project is supported by a high-level Project Advisory Board. The Board amongst others, provides expert guidance in relation to the implementation of the project, dissemination, scale-up or innovation diffusion.

Current Board Members



Professor Mary L'Abbe

Advisory Board Chair
INFORMAS Food Provision Module
Leader
Earle W. McHenry Professor, and
Chair, Department of Nutritional
Sciences, Faculty of Medicine,



Mrs. Mary Mpereh

National Development Planning
Commission
[Profile →](#)



Professor Kaleab Baye

Center for Food Science and
Nutrition, Addis Ababa University,
Ethiopia
[Profile →](#)



Dr. (Mrs). Beatrice Wiafe Addai

Ghana NCD Alliance
[Profile →](#)

MEALS4NCDs Advisory Board

[Home](#)[About the Project](#)[Project Resources](#)[Related Projects](#)[FERN Initiative](#)[Useful Links](#)[News & Events](#)[Contact Us](#)

Project Advisory Board

This project is supported by a high-level Project Advisory Board. The Board amongst others, provides expert guidance in relation to the implementation of the project, dissemination, scale-up or innovation diffusion.

Current Board Members



Dr. Emmanuel Odame Ankrah

Ministry of Health, Ghana

[Profile →](#)



Professor Bridget Kelly

INFORMAS Food Promotion Module
Leader

University of Wollongong,

Wollongong, Australia

[Profile →](#)



Mr. Issah Ali

Vision for Alternative Development
(VALD), Ghana

[Profile →](#)



Ms. Joana Ansong

World Health Organization, Ghana
Office

[Profile →](#)

MEALS4NCDs Advisory Board

[Home](#)[About the Project](#)[Resources](#)[Related Projects](#)[FERN Initiative](#)[Useful Links](#)[Press](#)[News & Events](#)[Blog](#)[Contact Us](#)

Dr. Rebecca Pradeilles
Senior Research Associate
Loughborough University
[Profile →](#)



Mrs. Delese Darko
Chief Executive Officer
Food and Drugs Authority, Ghana
[Profile →](#)



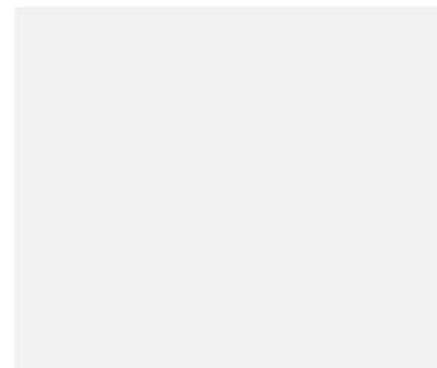
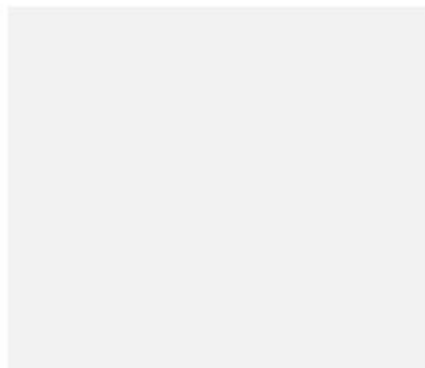
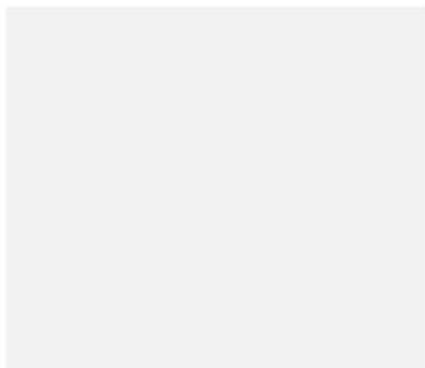
Ms. Lilian Selenje
Nutrition Manager
UNICEF, Ghana Office
[Profile →](#)



Dr. Namukolo Covic
International Food Policy Research
Institute (IFPRI), Ethiopia
[Profile →](#)




**Hon. (Dr) Sebastian Ngmenenso
Sandaare**
Member of Parliament and Member,
SRM



Amos Laar: combating non-communicable diseases in Ghana

Ray Cavanaugh

Published: June 11, 2019 • DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-8587\(19\)30216-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-8587(19)30216-5)  Check for updates

 PlumX Metrics

Ghana is on the rise. The west-African nation with a population of about 30 million has the second-fastest growing economy on the continent. However, obesity in Ghana is also fast-growing: in 2017, the prevalence of obesity was reported to be 6.5 times greater than it was in 1980. One of the most active voices in this crisis belongs to Amos Laar, a senior lecturer at the University of Ghana School of Public Health in Accra, the country's capital. Laar has been calling on the Ghanaian Government to pass legislation to regulate advertisement of unhealthy foods and drinks in print and online media, as well as in schools and other settings frequented by children and young people. He was also the lead author of a January, 2019, report that rated the Government's performance as low in creating healthy food environments, improving food environments, and monitoring the risk factors and prevalences of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Although Laar describes the Government's inaction as "particularly troubling", he also believes that Ghanaian health professionals should improve their own nutritional literacy. He says that the efforts of the Ghanaian health-care system to address NCDs are "scant", but adds that such inattention is probably due to an "absence of data that adequately describe the burden".

A native of rural Ghana, Laar received academic training

Laar points to the unique factors around obesity in Africa. "Having long been burdened with undernutrition, Africa as a whole has had her eyes on ridding the continent of hunger and food insecurity. Thus, over the years, high-level nutrition and health policies have not given overnutrition the respect it deserves", he argues. Although Ghana's poverty rate has declined in recent decades, a substantial number of economically deprived people continue to experience undernutrition. Meanwhile, the more recent epidemic of overnutrition continues to grow. Aside from the rise in processed and fast foods, recent rapid urbanisation in west Africa has led to a general decline in daily physical activity, which was for so long a fixture of traditional rural life. Indeed, urban Ghanaians are reported to be 2.6 times more likely to have obesity than their rural counterparts. An additional factor could be a mindset, common in many countries, that equates the patronage of western-style fast food restaurants with (western) prosperity.

The lethal effects of Ghana's widespread nutritional changes are easier to quantify. A 2017 *New York Times* article reported that, from 1990 to 2015, the nation saw a 179% increase in deaths related to high body mass. By contrast, the USA—no stranger to rising obesity—saw a 20% increase during the same period. Laar adds a separate statistic

Summary

- Baby steps ...
- Mobilized ...
- Taking off ...
- Engagements and preliminary data show that providing MEALS → improve the healthiness of the Ghanaian FE → engagements → evidence → advocacy → **policies**, regulatory, legislative, & fiscal measures supported by **leadership**

THANK YOU! MEALS4NCDs Project Partners



African Population and
Health Research Center



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO



Institut de Recherche
pour le Développement
FRANCE



Amsterdam UMC
University Medical Centers



IDRC | CRDI

International Development Research Centre
Centre de recherches pour le développement international

Canada

Thank you! Co-authors

Providing measurement, evaluation, accountability, and leadership support (MEALS) for NCDs prevention: Lessons from Ghana

A Laar
(Ghana)

Amos Laar¹, Gideon S. Amevinya¹, Irene A. Kumi¹, Patience Tsrach¹, Maxwell Konlan¹, Michelle Holdsworth^{2,3}

¹Department of Population, Family and Reproductive Health, School of Public Health, University of Ghana, Accra Ghana.

²School of Health and Related Research, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK

³IRD (French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development), NUTRIPASS Unit, IRD-Univ Montpellier-SupAgro Montpellier, Montpellier, France

For more information ...

alaar@ug.edu.gh

<https://www.meals4ncds.org/en/24>